

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 NEA-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 05031

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SUBJECT: THE SHELEPIN AFFAIR - DENOUEMENT

REF: LONDON 4861

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1. SUMMARY: ALEXANDER SHELPIN, LEADER OF THE RUSSIAN

TRADE UNION DELEGATION INVITED TO BRITAIN BY THE TUC, RETURNED TO MOSCOW APRIL 2 AFTER ONLY TWO DAYS OF WHAT WAS WIDELY EXPECTED TO BE A FOUR-DAY VISIT. HIS STAY IN BRITAIN WAS MARKED BY BITTER AND NOISY DEMONSTRATIONS. BOTH SHELEPIN AND LEN MURRAY, TUC GENERAL SECRETARY, DENY THAT THE VISIT WAS CUT SHORT BECAUSE OF THE PROTESTS AND INSIST THAT THE FULL LENGTH OF THE PROGRAM WAS CARRIED THROUGH AS PLANNED. ACCORDING TO SHELEPIN, THE DEMONSTRATIONS WERE THE WORK OF A SMALL GROUP OF PAID AGITATORS WHOSE AIM WAS TO IMPEDE CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND BRITAIN. HE CLAIMED THAT HE WAS NOT UPSET BY THE PROTESTS AND THAT HE WAS SATISFIED WITH HIS STAY IN BRITAIN. FOR HIS PART, LEN MURRAY DEFENDED THE TUC DECISION TO INVITE THE RUSSIANS TO BRITAIN AS "ABSOLUTELY RIGHT". END SUMMARY.

2. ALEXANDER SHELEPIN, THE SOVIET TRADE UNION LEADER AND A FORMER CHIEF OF THE KGB, ENDED HIS CONTROVERSIAL VISIT TO BRITAIN APRIL 2 AFTER TWO DAYS DURING WHICH HE WAS JEERED AND BARRACKED BY LARGE GROUPS OF DEMONSTRATORS. THE MAIN PROTESTS CAME ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE VISIT OUTSIDE THE LOCKED DOORS OF TUC HEADQUARTERS WHILE SHELEPIN AND HIS DELEGATION HELD SEVEN HOURS OF TALKS WITH MEMBERS OF THE TUC INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE. SUCH WAS THE MOOD OF THE CROWD THAT SHELEPIN AND HIS PARTY SLIPPED INTO THE TUC BUILDING BY A BACK ENTRANCE WHILE A DECOY BORE THE BRUNT OF THE CROWD'S ANGER AT THE FRONT - A SIMILAR PLOY HAVING TO BE USED WHEN THE DELEGATION LEFT. IN CONTRAST THE SECOND DAY OF THE VISIT, SPENT IN SCOTLAND MEETING WITH OFFICIALS OF THE SCOTTISH TUC, WAS RELATIVELY QUIET. WHILE DEMONSTRATORS PICKETED THE SCOTTISH TUC HEADQUARTERS IN GLASGOW, THE RUSSIAN DELEGATION PAID A SHORT VISIT TO A KILMARNOCK BALL-BEARING FACTORY AND HELD A THREE-HOUR LUNCH WITH SCOTTISH TRADE UNIONISTS AMID TIGHT SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WERE A FEATURE OF THE ENTIRE VISIT.

3. ON HIS DEPARTURE FOR HOME SHELEPIN DISMISSED THE SUGGESTION THAT HE HAD CUT SHORT HIS VISIT BECAUSE OF THE PROTESTS. THE PROGRAM, HE SAID, HAD BEEN AGREED UPON

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THREE WEEKS AGO. EVEN SO, THE DEMONSTRATIONS APPEARED TO HAVE HAD AN EFFECT ON SHELEPIN. SEVERAL TIMES DURING HIS DAY IN SCOTLAND HE MADE THE STARTLING ACCUSATION THAT THE JEWISH AND UKRAINIAN GROUPS WHO HAD PROTESTED AGAINST HIM IN LONDON CONSISTED OF PAID AGITATORS. THEY HAD, HE TOLD PRESSMEN, BEEN PAID 5 POUNDS EACH TO STAND AND SHOUT, ADDING THAT "I DID NOT HAVE TIME TO CONFRONT THEM...AND TELL THEM: YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN 5 POUNDS I AM

WILLING TO GIVE YOU 20 POUNDS TO GO HOME". OF THE JEWISH DEMONSTRATORS HE SAID: "THEY ARE SPITTING INTO A WELL FROM WHICH THEY MAY WISH TO DRINK. THESE ARE THE JEWS FOR THE SAKE OF WHOM WE LOST TWENTY MILLION OF OUR LIVES AND SAVED MANY OF THEIRS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR."

4. ACCORDING TO SHELEPIN, THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST HIS VISIT WAS UNREPRESENTATIVE OF THE BRITISH WORKING CLASS OR TRADE UNIONS. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE END OF THE FIRST DAY OF HIS VISIT, GIVEN TO A SMALL GROUP OF SELECTED JOURNALISTS FROM THE TIMES, FINANCIAL TIMES, GUARDIAN AND COMMUNIST MORNING STAR, HE SAID THAT THE REAL AIM OF THE CAMPAIGN WAS TO IMPEDE ANY ATTEMPTS AT COOPERATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE UK AND TO DISCREDIT

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THE "GREAT RESULTS" OF THE RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW OF THE PRIME MINISTER HAROLD WILSON. HE ALSO ACCUSED CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE BRITISH PRESS OF BEING SENSATIONAL IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR PRESTIGE AND DISMISSED AS "RUB-UNCLASSIFIED

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BISH" RECENT REPORTS THAT MR. BREZHNEV WAS ILL AND ABOUT TO LEAVE AND THAT THERE WAS A POWER STRUGGLE GOING ON IN THE KREMLIN. SHELEPIN MADE IT CLEAR THAT HIS TALKS WITH THE TUC, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS "HISTORICAL" AND PROVIDING FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN SOVIET-BRITISH TRADE UNION COOPERATION, WERE COMPLETED. HE HAD NOT ASKED, HE SAID FOR MEETINGS WITH GOVERNMENT MINISTERS, SO AFTER HIS VISIT TO SCOTLAND THERE WOULD BE LITTLE POINT IN HIS REMAINING IN BRITAIN.

5. AFTER BIDDING FAREWELL TO THE RUSSIAN DELEGATION ON ITS DEPARTURE FOR SCOTLAND, APRIL 2, LEN MURRAY DEFENDED THE TUC DECISION TO INVITE THE DELEGATION TO BRITAIN AS "ABSOLUTELY RIGHT". HE SAID THAT THE VISIT WAS "ANOTHER SMALL STEP TOWARDS IMPROVING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EAST AND WEST TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS" AND THAT IT COULD ONLY HELP BOTH SIDES BY GETTING TOGETHER. HE ALSO DENIED THAT SHELEPIN'S VISIT HAD BEEN CURTAILED BUT ADMITTED THAT THE DEMONSTRATIONS HAD AFFECTED THE ARRANGEMENTS. "THERE IS NOT THE SLIGHTEST DOUBT," HE SAID, "THAT HAD WE NOT HAD THIS BACKGROUND IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE RELAXED. THERE WAS A DELIBERATE CAMPAIGN BUILT UP IN THIS COUNTRY WHICH MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO DO WHAT WE WANTED...TO HAVE TAKEN THEM (THE DELEGATION) INTO A FEW FACTORIES WOULD HAVE GIVEN THEM SOME IDEA OF THIS." HE ADDED THAT HE HAD TOLD THE RUSSIANS THAT DEMONSTRATIONS WERE PART OF THE BRITISH WAY OF LIFE AND WERE NOT UNUSUAL OUTSIDE TUC HEADQUARTERS, EVEN SOMETIMES BY COMMUNISTS. "THEY WERE PUZZLED BY THIS BUT NOT UNDULY DISTURBED." OF SHELEPIN PERSONALLY, MURRAY SAID THAT HE WAS "A VERY COM-

PETENT MAN, REARED IN A HARD REGIME. I AM SURE, IN TALKING TO HIM, HE IS REALLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN THE SOVIET UNION."

6. A STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE TUC ON ITS TALKS WITH THE RUSSIAN DELEGATION SAID THAT BOTH SIDES WELCOMED THE RESULTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND MR. BREZHNEV IN MOSCOW "WHICH COULD SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR FUTURE FRUITFUL AND MUTALLY BENEFICIAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND GREAT BRITAIN." THE TWO SIDES EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET UNCLASSIFIED

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BRITISH TRADE UNION COOPERATION WOULD BE PROMOTED BY FURTHER EXPANSION OF BILATERAL CONTACTS, WHICH MIGHT INCLUDE EXCHANGES OF DELEGATIONS, OF TRADE UNION JOURNALISTS, TEACHERS AND LECTURERS AND OF INFORMATION GENERALLY. ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT, IT WAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE TUC AND AUCCTU, THE SOVIET TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION, SHOULD CONSIDER HOLDING SEMINARS ON PROBLEMS OF COMMON INTEREST AND SHOULD CONSIDER COOPERATION IN THE SPIRIT OF THE WARTIME ANGLO-SOVIET TRADE UNION COMMITTEE - WHICH ENDED IN THE 1940'S WITH THE COLD WAR.

7. ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, BOTH SIDES SAID THEY WOULD WELCOME MOVES ON THE PART OF GOVERNMENTS TO CONVENE A WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT; AGREED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO CONSIDER INITIATIVES WHICH MIGHT HELP TO ACHIEVE A JUST AND LASTING SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS; AND, AGREED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO ENSURE

THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY OF CYPRUS AND TO IMPLEMENT THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON VIETNAM.

RICHARDSON

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